

Spin Labelling Methods in Molecular Biology

by G. I. Likhtenshtein

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vii + 258 pages. £ 26.00, \$ 39.00

This book was published in the USSR in 1974 and has just appeared in translation. This unfortunate delay will limit the usefulness of an interesting and well presented review, the clarity of which has been maintained in the translation.

Professor Likhtenshtein is the director of the laboratory of Enzyme Catalysis at the Institute of Chemical Physics of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and his book is written as an approach to problems in enzymology for workers who are not specialists in the spin label technique. The result is a very clear account of the applications of the spin label method to proteins and which includes only the essential theoretical sections.

The first two chapters are introductory, the former to the spectra of spin labels and the latter to the structures of the spin labels themselves. A minor irritation is that all subsequent references to individual spin labels are numerical, and to this chapter. Then follow three excellent chapters on nitroxide biradicals (Chapter III), interactions with paramagnetic ions (Chapter IV) and nuclear magnetic resonance studies of spin labelled preparations (Chapter V). Chapter VI covers the detection of conformational changes in proteins, and Chapter VII the local mobility with water associated with the protein structure. A not unexpected attractive feature of this book is the thorough coverage

of the Soviet literature in this field. This is particularly evident in Chapters VIII and IX, the former on luminescent, Mössbauer and electron scattering labels and the latter covering the extraction of thermodynamic parameters from enzyme spin label studies, leading into a discussion of mechanisms of enzyme action. The final chapter alone reviews the spin labelling of biological membranes and nuclear acids, and in this chapter particularly, one is reminded of the progress in spin labelling in the last five years.

In the early chapters some biomolecules are recurrent examples, and the benefits of various aspects of the spin label technique are apparent. In this category, the following biomolecules should be mentioned, lysozyme hemoglobin, myoglobin, serum albumin and cytochromes *c* and *P-450*.

This book should probably be judged as complementary to rather than in competition with the recent publication, 'Spin Labelling, Theory and Application' edited by L. J. Berliner, which has gained rapid acceptance as the definitive reference book for regular users of spin labels. Hence this book will fill a gap in providing a valuable introduction to spin labelling for biochemists although, at £ 26, it seems rather expensive for its length.

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